



July 8, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Emergency Leahy Appeal: Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya's Life At Imminent Risk in Israeli Detention

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We are writing to bring your attention to the urgent case of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya amidst reports from his lawyer that there is *an imminent threat to his life* due to *torture and other ill-treatment* and *denial of adequate medical care* to which he has been subjected while in Israeli detention.¹ Time is running out, and we urge you to intervene to secure his immediate and unconditional release.

This treatment is consistent with the gross violations of human rights Amnesty International has documented against Palestinian detainees seized by the Israeli military and held by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS).² The abuse documented raises serious concerns that U.S. assistance may be funding units of a foreign security force implicated in the commission of gross violations of human rights. Amnesty International shared that research with the U.S. State Department in July 2024.

Given the urgency of this case and in light of the State Department's closure of the Human Rights Reporting Gateway, we believe it is critical to publicly issue this letter asking the U.S. to take urgent action to prevent further abuses. In addition to reviewing U.S. security assistance for Leahy violations, we call on you to swiftly take action to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Abu Safiya. Pending his release, we further call on you to ensure that he is fully protected from further abuses and is provided with adequate access to medical care, food, and hygiene. Independent monitors, including the International Committee for the Red Cross, must also be granted access to him and all other Palestinian detainees.

Further, in line with the provisions of the Leahy Law (22 U.S.C. § 2378d), the involved Israeli security forces must not receive any U.S. military assistance given their documented gross violations of human rights, including torture and other ill-treatment.

¹ Amnesty International, "Israel/OPT: Fears mounting for arbitrarily detained Palestinian doctor Hussam Abu Safiya amidst reports his life is in grave danger," July 6, 2026, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/07/israel-opt-fears-mounting-for-arbitrarily-detained-palestinian-doctor-hussam-abu-safiya-amidst-reports-his-life-is-in-grave-danger/>.

² Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza," July 18, 2024, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/israel-must-end-mass-incommunicado-detention-and-torture-of-palestinians-from-gaza/>.

Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya is a Palestinian pediatrician and the director of Kamal Adwan hospital in the occupied Gaza Strip. Like many healthcare workers before him, he was detained while caring for his patients and carrying out his medical duties. He has been arbitrarily and unlawfully, detained by Israeli authorities since December 27, 2024, without charge or trial.³ For over 18 months, he has been detained under the cruel and abusive Unlawful Combatants Law⁴, which authorizes the Israeli military to issue indefinitely renewable detention orders against anyone from Gaza suspected of posing a threat to state or security engagement in hostile activities based on classified evidence and without having to produce an indictment.

It was not until February 11, 2025, that Israeli authorities finally allowed Dr. Abu Safiya to meet with legal counsel. Following a visit to Ofer military prison in early July 2025, his lawyer at the time reported that Dr. Abu Safiya and other detainees were subjected to assault and beatings.⁵ She also stated that Dr. Abu Safiya showed signs of significant weight loss as the IPS continues to impose severe restrictions on Palestinian detainees' access to food, adequate medical care, and hygiene.⁶

Currently, Dr. Abu Safiya is being held in Rakevet detention center, an underground section beneath the Ayalon prison complex located in Ramla, Israel, where detainees, mostly Palestinians from the occupied Gaza Strip, are subjected to systematic torture and other inhumane treatment.⁷ The detention center was re-opened after having been originally closed in 1985 for its inhumane conditions.⁸ Since June 3, 2026, Dr. Abu Safiya has been held in solitary confinement exceeding the 15 consecutive days permitted under the Nelson Mandela Rules, which violates the prohibition on torture and other ill-treatment. The IPS is also denying him care for his health conditions.⁹

On June 16, 2026, Israel's Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Dr. Abu Safiya for his release, upholding the continuation of his detention until at least October 2026. Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHRI) believes that the escalating attacks against Dr. Abu Safiya are linked to his appeal and his attempts to challenge his detention at court.¹⁰

The latest reports of Dr. Abu Safiya's deteriorating conditions and the severe abuse he is enduring at the hands of the IPS emerged following a visit by a lawyer for PHRI, Nasser Odeh, on July 2, 2026. Odeh stated that since Dr. Abu Safiya's transfer to Rakevat, he has been subjected to daily beatings, threats, and to other forms of abuse.¹¹ Odeh also reported observing fresh bruises and torture marks on Dr. Abu Safiya's head and across his body, leaving him barely recognizable.¹²

³ Amnesty International, "Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Further Information: Release Pediatrician and Hospital Director: Dr Hussam Abu Safiya," June 30, 2026, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/1242/2026/en/>.

⁴ Amnesty International, "Israel must end mass incommunicado detention and torture of Palestinians from Gaza," July 18, 2024, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/israel-must-end-mass-incommunicado-detention-and-torture-of-palestinians-from-gaza/>.

⁵ Amnesty International, "Release Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya!," at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/petition/release-dr-hussam-abu-safiya/>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Amnesty International, "Israel/OPT: Fears mounting for arbitrarily detained Palestinian doctor Hussam Abu Safiya amidst reports his life is in grave danger," July 6, 2026, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/07/israel-opt-fears-mounting-for-arbitrarily-detained-palestinian-doctor-hussam-abu-safiya-amidst-reports-his-life-is-in-grave-danger/>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Amnesty International, "Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Further Information: Release Pediatrician and Hospital Director: Dr Hussam Abu Safiya," June 30, 2026, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/1242/2026/en/>.

¹⁰ See Physicians for Human Rights – Israel, "Save Dr. Abu Safiya," July 5, 2026, at: https://www.phr.org.il/en/save-dr-abu-safiya/?pr=9523&_cf_chl_f_tk=cH0dijvagwmnBdTT4Akeeb_PDHE8sV5E.MGIK0Hmes-1783372580-1.0.1.1-iNRnbdNOgcES2iZjdyfDxDXyGfSCXBoKePSsC4ILWSw and Amnesty International, "Israel/OPT: Fears mounting for arbitrarily detained Palestinian doctor Hussam Abu Safiya amidst reports his life is in grave danger," July 6, 2026, at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/07/israel-opt-fears-mounting-for-arbitrarily-detained-palestinian-doctor-hussam-abu-safiya-amidst-reports-his-life-is-in-grave-danger/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Odeh said that Dr. Abu Safiya arrived at their meeting with his hands and feet shackled and on the verge of losing consciousness.¹³ Odeh further reported that Dr. Abu Safiya told him, “This is the last time you’ll see me... they brought me here to kill me.”¹⁴

Amnesty International is horrified at the deteriorating conditions of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya and deeply alarmed by the reports from his lawyer indicating that his life is at imminent risk amidst his ongoing unlawful detention. No one should be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. It is unconscionable that a pediatrician providing life-saving care in Gaza who refused to abandon his patients is being subjected to severe physical and psychological abuse and prolonged solitary confinement – all while being detained without any justification.

We ask you to please act swiftly and urgently in responding to the ongoing torture and imminent threat to Dr. Abu Safiya’s life and to bring U.S. assistance in line with Congressional mandated safeguards. We are highlighting this urgent case, as we believe it to be a matter of life and death. We also ask that the US administration to do all that is within its power to secure the release of all Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israeli authorities.

Sincerely,

Nadia Daar
Executive Director
Amnesty International USA

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.